The Truth About the Gary School Rebellion

Mothers, Children, Principals and Politicians All Give Their Views-Few Parents Guilty of Causing Trouble

By Frank B. Elser

F YOU were a child, let us say any- ures were unfortunate in their appliwhere between six and fifteen years of age, and you were sent to a public school where, instead of having to sit all day facing one teacher in one mirable was the work-study-play system. sit all day facing one teacher in one room monotonously roting the "three R's," you marched from room to room as the session wore on, and varied this with play or shopwork, or, if you were a girl, with making a hat or sewing, do you think would "strike" against have a row fargled as it debet decided that a campaign of

3 That nine-tenths, or, more accurately, perhaps, ninety-nine-hundredths, of the children followed mob law in striking. They enjoyed the novelty and excitement of it.

plied here, but their objections fall mainly in a field of academic con-troversy comparable to a discussion in which the Supreme Court might divide

-That nothing in the Gary system as applied in New York would Fifteenth Street.

Accompanying this feeler was a fourcause children to strike of their own initiative.

7-That the strike, therefore, was tem, but was due to a variety of causes and events arising primarily but not entirely from the Mayoralty

Attacks "Militarism"

To get a proper understanding of the situation it will be necessary to turn from the elementary schools where the strikes occurred to the high schools of the city. When the high schools opened in September they did so on a schedule of a school day longer by one hour than theretofore. The last Legislature had passed the so-called Weish bill, a warbred measure, requiring military training in the schools and the Gary out its provisions the extra sixty mining of high school boys, and to carry out its provisions the extra sixty minutes were tacked on the day's session. Now, many high school boys work after school, and, in innumerable cases, with trothers gone with the colors or in the great army of the drafted, they were acutely needed at this time of high values to do this high states. prices to do their bit after school toward increasing the family income. The extra hour either stopped such

The extra hour either stopped such work entirely or seriously curtailed it.

There were complaints. These were followed by more organized protests, and finally, in mid-October, by mass meetings and sporadic strikes. Meantime, the elementary schools, which had opened quietly enough on September 10, were running along as usual, with no hint of trouble. The thirty-three Gary schools, with nearly 90,000 pupils, were no exception. If these pupils were obsessed with the idea that the work-

study-play system, now in vogue in New
York for three years, had suddenly become something to be fought, they did
not voice it by word or action.

But talk of the unrest in the high
schools spread, especially among the Socialists. That extra hour for "military training" smacked of militarism,
of the war party, of capitalism, of
Rockefellerism, the Steel Trust. Obviously conditions were prime for both
Hylan and Hillquit to "go over the top"
on the school question. Already Tamviously conditions were prime for both Hylan and Hillquit to "go over the top" on the school question. Already Tamon the school question. Already Tam-many had maintained a pretty steady barrage fire of anti-Gary pamphlets. Imagine new the talk and rumor and many had maintained a pretty steady barrage fire of anti-Gary pamphlets, while Judge Hylan in his canned speeches had again and again attacked the Mitchel school policy. Hilfquit sided with neither, but assailed both his relatives and the began to talk and to believe all sorts believe all sorts began to talk and to believe all sorts began to talk and to believe all sorts believe all sorts began to talk and to believe all sorts believe al opponents, and in his spoken addresses of preposterous nonsense. Pupils in was careful, even moderate, in stating the Gary schools, so the gossip ran, opponents, and in his spoken addresses what he thought was wrong with the were put to making articles useful in M Gary schools. As has been indicated for the Steel Trust. High school boys lyn. above, hefheld that the plan had many excellent features, but that these feat- and then drafted. These and other ber

ONE OF THE SCHOOL GROUPS ON A HOLIDAY STRIKE



This demonstration took place in Brownsville, a section in no way involved in the original trouble. The youngsters' faces show that getting their picture taken was a most enjoyable feature of the occasion.

Tately, perhaps, ninety-nine-hundredths, of the children followed mob law in striking. They enjoyed the novelty and excitement of it.

That there are hundreds of mothers with fire with the Gary ers who find fault with the Gary ers who find fault with the Gary system, but their criticism to a great extent are the outgrowth of propagands with which their homes have been deluged. Some, however, have real grievances.

That hundreds of teachers are against the Gary system as applied here, but their objections of the Committee, but I am interested in its objects.

Fasse (1) or (2)

Same

Faste Fifteenth Street.

Possibly, because he is a psychologist and should know the minds of men and children, Professor Cattell was celected to conduct the Socialist school drive. In any event, his name is attached to this, as sent out from Socialist headquarters:

(1) I am willing to become a member of Thousand for the Children of New York City and their Schools.

(2) I do not wish to become a member of the Committee, but I am interested in its objects.

Erase (1) or (2)

Name

Address

Name

Name

Name

Address

The fellowing might be interested in the rock of the Committee:

The Committee:

Name

The fellowing might be interested in the gument, about half of the school's regulation of 3,700 was got inside; the work of the Committee:

Names may be continued on the reverse
Please return to J. McKeen Cattell, 7 East
Pifteenth Street.

as applied in New York would cause children to strike of their initiative.

That the strike, therefore, was not really against the Gary system, but was due to a variety of AND THEIR SCHOOLS.

Later about a thousand of these ame in.

Questioned as to why they struck, not a few of the boys said they had done so because the boys of the High School of Commerce had been striking.

Others spoke vaguely and parrot-like School of Commerce had been striking.
Others spoke vaguely and parrot-like
of the evils of the Gary system. Mothers, questioned, insisted stoutly, with
few exceptions, that fear of personal
violence to their children had caused
them either to keep them home or to
accompany them to school, to see what
all the trouble was about. AND THEIR SCHOOLS
FOR HILLQUIT—FOR THE SCHOOLS
—FOR THE CHILDREN

the circular. These paragraphs will give an idea of its import:

"The Mitchel administration has a black school record. Members of the Board of Education were appointed by the Mayor only after pledging them to support military training in the schools and the Gary plan. Two of his appointees were employes of the Rockefeller Foundation. The Board of Education has been subordinated to the Board of Estimate and Apportienment. Mayor Mitchel has sacrificed the welfare of the children and of the teachers of the classes whose puppet he is.

"Even militaristic Germany has no military training in its schools; those teachers who favor universal military service find no excuse for the futile and perverting military training of young children. The National Education Association has year after year protested against it.

"The Gary plan, imported from the city of the Steel Trust and promoted by the Rockefeller Foundation, has been adopted by Mayor Mitchel's personal School Board to save the cost of building schools and paying teachers. There are those who have the more sinister motives of making religious instruction in the churches part of the school work and of limiting the opportunities of the children of the workers by establishing class schools like those of Germany."

Nowhere does the foregoing say anything about rioting, as did the very thing about rioting as did the very th The strike spread. While the centre of the original disturbance—School 171—remained in a state of semi-re-bellion, disaffection took hold of three bellion, disaffection took hold of three schools in The Bronx—Nos. 52, 53 and 54. Striking pupils marched and yelled and hooted, some bearing crudely printed banners and cardboard slogans. "Down with Mitchell" some of these proclaimed. "Down with the Gerry (sic) system!" Those who read were admonished to vote for both Hylan and Hillquit. Not on the same banner, of course. But the merits of each and Hillquit. Not on the same banner, of course. But the merits of each candidate were variously proclaimed.

From The Bronx the strike spread to the lower East Side, to non-Gary schools; from the East Side to the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn and to East New York. On Fridey, October 19, it attained its high tide, when nearly twenty schools and possibly thirty thousand pupils were affected.

The Board of Education and the Bureau of Attendance had become now strike-breaking headquarters. Fortunately, there intervened the Saturday holiday, a period during which all

Dear Sir (or Madam)—In case of trouble on Monday or thereafter next week, relative to disturbances in schools and on the streets, you are directed to follow these instructions:

ATTENDANCE OFFICERS will be held in reserve in the following places. In case of need telephone the centre at your school. Here followed a list of six centres in Manhattan, The Bronx and Brook-

POLICE will be furnished to any num-er needed. Telephone nearest police sta-

tion. If within ten minutes help enough is not at hand, telephone General Police Headquarters. Mothers Oppose So Much Shop Work And Need for Getting Extra Meals

Now for the mothers-mostly Jewish | 1 - That due to the change of teachothers, mothers whose children are in the Gary schools. Of the more than fifty interviewed by an investigator for the Tribune, about one-tenth expressed themselves as indifferent or neutral; about one-half of the remainder said they did not in all ways like the system of the system of

themselves as indifferent or neutral; same of the individent of the individual of th

October 11, 1917.

ers every fifty minutes, the individual interest of a teacher in her way, The Bronx:

necessary complaint, but it seems

whole life is spent in getting meals for the children, who all come home at different times." In the same house lives Mrs. Thomas

Madden, mother of eight.
"The Gary system is hard on par-"The Gary system is hard on parents, children and the teachers, too," she declared. "The children must be out of the house by 8:10 o'clock every morning, or else they complain they are late, and are kept in until 4:30 o'clock. They come home to lunch at 11:10, and they have to be fed and started back again before 12 o'clock. I have two boys who work, and they come home at 12 o'clock, too, for lunch. "Before the Gary system was used

"Before the Gary system was used the children had the same teacher all day and learned something. Now they change teachers every hour, and the children don't learn so much."

Doctor States His Opposition to the System

Dr. J. Winslow Edgerly, of 418 East 136th Street, is opposed to the Gary system because he says it neglects the

fundamentals.

Politics Heavily Involved in Out. breaks That Have Little Bearing on Actual Working of New Study Plan

The time wasted in changing we could use for another study period. I'm in the printing class. During the school year we have to take ten weeks in printing and ten in the machine shops. Unless a boy kept this up for a long time he wouldn't earn any money at it."

Morris's mother spoke heatedly. "They make workmen out of the boys and scrubwomen out of the girls. The school is like foremen and workmen. Parents take the bread out of their own mouths to keep the children in when they leave school they study is the time they should be studying the study in the start of the start of the start of the start of the school they play all the time they should be studying the start of t

Parents take the bread out of their own mouths to keep the children in school as long as possible so they may have an education. We send them so they can earn money later on. When looking for a job it's not scrubbing that gets you one, but learning."

"Running up and down stairs hurts my girl—she's got heart trouble,"

"Running up and down stairs hurts my girl—she's got heart trouble,"

Principals Generally Commend Plan. But Say It Can Be Better Applied

After hearing all these complaints
The Tribune investigator sought the teachers in the Gary schools for explanation and enlightenment. In this connection it must be said that although the answers appeared to be frank and were to a casual inquirer convincing, one invariably was referred, not to the teachers directly in contact with the pupil, but to principals or to persons higher. This inevitably left the impression that there were at times causes of friction, times when the system did not in all ways work satisfactorily, but that, instead of conceding and discussing this, school heads were going ahead with set and heretofore formulated arguments, based on the theory that the system as a whole is sound and its application entirely satisfactory. Said Eugene Gartlan, principal of Public School 42, Claremont Parkway, The Bronx:

"Another untrue charge is that the youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy youngsters are obliged to stand outsite for indeterminate periods in hy weather, waiting to be admitted her me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say that you cannot keep them say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say that you cannot keep them say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot keep them say the me say that you cannot

That when children are tardy in arriving at school, for whatever reason, they are kept until very late in the afternoon.

That the school day is too long under the Gary system.

Mrs. Alexander Bruno, 141 St. Anne's Avenue, has nine children.

"My family keeps me working every minute with that Gary system," she said. "I don't want to make any unsaid."

That when children heard of. This condition I have never heard of. This condition II have never heard of. This color in the early system. "No children are kept waiting in the early sy

"We have had the system here to one term only, and it is too early judge it. I try to minimize the fau and enhance the very distinct advantage of the control of the contro

System Has Unearthed Political.

and, briefly in review, what it is. It came to New York after Mayor Mitchel and others, including Mr. Churchill, its now most bitter opponent, had investigated its working in Gary, Ind.; in Cincinnati and elsewhere. At the steel town of Gary, named for the chairman of the Steel Corporation board, William Wirt, school principal and educator, had inaugurated the duplicate school—that is, two schools moving through one—and had thus doubled a given school's daily capacity. At the plan came to New York three years ago

The proposed pilgrimage to the Chi Hall never materialized.

children a disrespect for law a the unfortunate result of th the Mitchel administration to

Labor and Religious Discussions

Here just a word on how the Gary caste. Finally, all religious faiture were eliminated.

It is a very serious thing in this div when even Murphy will try to take its school system of New York and drag a down into politics by organizing even the boys and girls at school into a movement for school strikes, and organizing the patch of the children through a campaign deliberate misrepresentation into mements of protest against the city admistration, even to the point of organizar them to come down to the City fall, at am told that they propose to do on two day morning, at Mr. Murphy's request.

In answer to the charges of Mitchel, Judge Hylan prepared to statement for The Tribune:

statement for The Tribune:

An attempt has been made by Mare Mitchel and others to make pointeal captal out of the unfortunate and magues trikes of public school children, aded it their parents, by charging that points parties have inspired these outhreas.

The parents are opposed to the Midsandministration because it has accident administration because it has neglected build new schools, and because it is sought to cover up the bad effects of self-aligned by extending all over the city makeshift Gary plan. This opposition well known, and it did not need any strict demonstrate it.

In my opinion, these deplorable of breaks, which are bound to develop in sechildren a diarespect for law and order, a children a diarespect for law and order.

All Parents Associations, Mothers Circles and other organizations having the protection and the progress of our Public Schools at heart are WARMED that thru a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board of Education, yesterday afternoom (October 10th) and in the appointment of a socalled Publicity Committee, the Board of Education intends holding in your schools public meetings for the purpose of trying to get votes for Mayor Mitchel from parents by giving a partisan and one-sided exposition of the "Mitchel-Makeshift Plan" of education under the guise of the "Gary System".

It is their intention net to permit Parents or Parents Associations either to answer or oppose their *pran*. It is to be a one-sided affair intended to fool the gullible and to stifle a proper and democratic hearing of both sides of the

You are TARRED therefore to insist upon your rights as American citizens to have BOTH SIDES presented before you so that you

ADVANCE WARNING GIVEN OF RIOTS

PARENTS SCHOOL BETTERMENT LEAGUE

OF GREATER NEW YORK EXECUTIVE OFFICER 45 WEST 34TH STREET

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

NEW YORK

may not become prejudiced or be compelled to accept a partisan, false or misleading exposition of this "Mitchel-Make-Shift"

under the name of "Gary". I understand that all attempts to have the Parents' side ex-

I understand that all attempts to have the Parents' side explained will be met with determined opposition. This is likely to cause grave trouble, perhaps riot and disorder, and it is your duty to do all in your power to prevent such disorder and to present your cause with dignity, calmess and determination, remembering always that the schools are yours and that you have a right to be heard on any question that affects them or the welfare of your children. Speakers will be supplied you, should you desire them. Please keep in touch with me as this organization will aid you in every possible way for Right, Justice. Law and Crder. Justice, Law and Order.

Very truly yours.

JAMES F. MacGRATH,

Executive Secretary.

This is the document which the Fusion orces say, as much as anything, caused he anti-Gary school strikes and riots. James P. Holland, labor leaders; Mayer It will be noted that on September 11, nearly a week before the first strike, the circular speaks of the probability of "grave trouble, perhaps riot and dis-

It bears but one signature, and that typewritten. But on the reverse side, in name also appears, is another red ink, are printed some forty names. friend of Churchill. Louis H. red ink, are printed some forty names. Of the owners of these names some are identified with Tammany, others are lendorser, was a one-time member of the School Board. He wanted to be a system, and still others are just persons who, banded in associations with interlocking directorates have come to be known as professional opponents of the Cary plan and of the Fusion ad-

C. Goldman, a lawyer and an intimate friend of ex-President Churchill of the Board of Education, and Frank D. Wilsey, a former member of the School Board, who faield of reappointment by Mayor Mitchel. Ernest F. Eilert, whose

we only succeed in seeing aim every day for the children. Besides the sub-ject of fundamentals, I object to the running up and down stairs every change of period. It is very bad for children who are not altegether strong. Last year I had to order several chil-dren out of school because of the stairs. Many mothers have come to me profes-

given school's daily capacity. At the same time he had added certain playwork-study features, based fundamentally on the theory of Froebel, who asserted years ago that all children were creative rather than receptive, and that educational work should be fundamentals.

"I have been opposed to the use of the system for a long time," he said, "and neither my wife nor myself can see any good in it. We both have honself yield to find its advantages, but we only succeed in seeing harm every came here, and his system, with modified they the children Resides the sub-ficient was installed. Almost imme-

fications, was installed. Almost immediately it became the subject of heated political controversy. Churchill, first its warm advocate, charged that Mayor Mitchel, after adopting the system un-der the guise of stimulating and broad-ening the public school's shop work. and other practical things listed in category as pre-vocational training, about-faced and subordinated this, and sionally with this complaint of the pressed the duplicate school Gary system." merely as an expediency to solve the problem of overcrowding and to save

subject of the strike was discussed in every hallway and there were overflow meetings on the stairways.

"The children walk more than they study," said Mrs. Alexander Setanosky. "I want my five children to learn something at school, and not to play games in the yard. They can play after school is over."

"My children don't learn so well in the Gary system as they did before," spoke up Mrs. Morris Stone for the system of overcrowding and to save money.

To some extent this is probably true. Certainly, what with limited playground space and school buildings not completely adjusted to the new system, the Gary idea is not being fully carried out in New York. Nor do its supporters maintan that it is. They call it the duplicate plan, and one which best suits the city's requirements, in view of many pressing problems. Probably this is true also.

In any event, the Gary and to save

"My children don't learn so well in the Gary system as they did before," spoke up Mrs. Morris Stone from her doorway.

"My girl learned better with two teachers than she does now with five or six. She has to scrub and sew, too. I don't want her to be a scrubwoman or a dressmaker, but to learn something."

"I've got three children, and all they do is change teachers and run up and down stairs. They have enough running to do at home here," declared Mrs. Jacob Temaschow.

"My daughter gets so tired the cold."

"My children don't learn so well in the Gary system has been hammered these three years, perhaps as no issue in the city was ever hammered. Labor shied at it first because the name "Gary" sounded trust-like. Then the Rockfeller cry was raised, certain gentlemen connected directly or indirectly with the Rockeller cry was raised, certain gentlemen connected dito the Board of Education. This person escape the conclusion that deep strations of children and adults, and take as they are, are but an outward take as they are, are

"My daughter gets so tired she can't There was also added to the can't "My daughter gets so tired she can't eat because every fifty minutes she has to run up and down the stairs. They make her back and heart ache," put in Mrs. Louis Horowitz.

Another flight up Morris Melworm, eleven and a half years old, undersized and unusually bright, interpreted for his mother and told his own reasons for disliking his school.

"We change classes nine times a day."

"We change classes nine times a day."

"As originally adopted the plan here provided that children should be taken from the schools at intervals for religious instruction in their various faiths. Catholics and Jews; that is, some of them, immediately protested, pointing out the danger of Protestant provided that children should be taken from the schools at intervals for religious of them, immediately protested, some of them, immediately protested, pointing out the danger of Protestant provided that children should be taken from the schools at intervals for religious of them, immediately protested, some of them, immediately protested, pointing out the danger of Protestant provided that children should be taken from the schools at intervals for religious of them, immediately protested, some of them, immediately protested, pointing out the danger of Protestant provided that children should be taken from the schools at intervals for religious of them, immediately protested, some of them, immediately protested, pointing out the danger of Protestant provided that children should be taken from the provided that children should be taken from the gray of the plan here strike.

What is the trouble with the Gary system? It is just this pointing. The Gary system is in the gray of the plan here should be taken from the provided that children should be taken from